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AUTHOR Pudelka, Pam; Macha, Becky
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ABSTRACT

The Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP), enacted into law in the fall of 1989, was designed to insure that public college students in Texas would have the basic skills necessary to perform in college-level courses. The TASP law requires that students be tested prior to completing 9 or 15 semester hours of college-level work. The law also requires that each institution report annually on the effectiveness of its remediation and advising program and that students who require remediation be continuously remediated. At Del Mar College, students are assessed using the TASP assessment instrument, as well as the American College Testing (ACT) Program test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The college offers two levels of developmental classes in reading, English, and mathematics. Using a specially designed assessment chart, students' test scores can be evaluated by an advisor to determine the appropriate remedial placement. The counseling, advising, and testing office employs five academic advisors hired specifically to monitor TASP remedial students, and to handle special student referrals from instructors in remedial courses. To encourage students having difficulties, remedial faculty may issue a mark of "remedial incomplete" which does not convert to a letter grade and which allows students to retake a course. The college also offers free workshops on topics such as test-taking, study skills, and coping with procrastination. Other activities for TASP students have included a special study-skills courses and faculty mentoring lunches. The assessment chart and a sample counseling referral sheet are attached. (PAA)

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Beyond Remediation:
Monitoring Progress and Promoting Success

By
Pam Pudelka
and
Becky Macha

Del Mar College
101 Baldwin Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78407-3897

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BEYOND REMEDIATION: MONITORING PROGRESS AND PROMOTING SUCCESS

by Pam Pudelka and Becky Macha
Academic Advisors

presented at the 13th Annual International Conference on Teaching Excellence & Conference of Administrators by Pam Pudelka and Irma Carmona, Academic Advisors

Del Mar College was established in 1935 to provide 2 years of post-secondary education. It is located on the gulf coast of Texas in the city of Corpus Christi, a city with a population of approximately 250,000 people.

The college offers programs on two campuses within the city. Fall enrollment exceeded 10,000 for students taking credit courses. The average age of students is 26 years old. Nearly 30% of all students are over 29 years of age, and the number of senior citizens attending college is increasing. Female students outnumber males 6 to 4 and 65% of our enrollment consists of part-time students. The student body is 53% minority with a great percentage being Hispanic.

Del Mar offers four associate degrees for students completing a transfer plan. In addition there is also an Associate in Applied Science for students in a technical/occupational degree plan or students may complete requirements for various certificates.

We think it is important to give you an image of Del Mar to better grasp our monitoring students and promoting their success. Furthermore, a major emphasis in the state has been placed on the Texas Academic Skills Program. The TASP law went into effect in Texas public colleges in the fall of 1989. The purpose of the law is to insure that students have the basic skills necessary to perform in college-level courses. In order to determine this, students are required to be tested prior to completing 9 or 15 semester hours of college level work. Del Mar College uses the 15 hour rule, since entering students are tested and placed in classes using ACT, SAT, or ASSET test scores.

On attachment number one, you will find a copy of the placement chart used by Del Mar College. It shows that we offer two levels of developmental classes, designed to improve students' skills so that they can succeed in college-level work. ACT, SAT, or ASSET scores must be less than 5 years old to be used for placement.

Let's look at a specific example. Suppose a student scores 16 on the ACT English. He would be required to begin his English program with English 302. This is a level 2 remedial course. Students who score below 13 on the ACT English portion would begin their English program with English 606AB and then proceed to English 302. The TASP law allows students to take college-level courses concurrently with their enrollment in developmental classes, so each of our courses is rated according to the level of reading, English, and

math skills required. A student with an ACT English score below 13 could only register for classes which are rated at level one in English.

On attachment number one, please notice the decision zone. If a student's test scores fall in the decision zone, an advisor can use additional data, such as high school G.P.A., enrollment in honors courses, or class rank, to place him/her in whatever level seems appropriate. If the student is available at the time placement is made, he/she may be questioned about his/her skills and placed according to that. So the decision zone provides us with a formal process to use when a student feels, for some reason, that his/her tests scores do not accurately reflect his/her abilities. Although we do not use the decision zone routinely to advance a student's placement, it does provide us with a formal procedure for meeting individual student needs, which is part of the Del Mar College mission.

Although we have very few students who take the TASP test prior to enrollment, we also accept passing TASP scores for placement into college-level work. Some instructors were concerned that perhaps the TASP test did not accurately indicate that a student had the same skill level as the other assessment instruments, so we collected the data shown on attachment number two. The graph shows the number of students enrolled in college level English who qualified for the course, divided according to the type of test they took. We then calculated what percent of those students passed the class. As the attachment shows, there is very little difference in the likelihood that a student will pass regardless of which test was used to place him. Students in college algebra displayed similar results.

The TASP law also requires that each institution report annually on the effectiveness of its remediation and advising program. It also requires that students who need remediation must be continuously remediated. Thus students who need remediation may not drop their remedial classes, unless an alternate program of remediation is provided. Thus our monitoring function serves two purposes: we want to be sure that we are in compliance with the law, but we also want to intervene before a student tries to drop his/her remedial classes.

In the counseling, advising, and testing office there are five academic advisors hired to monitor students who must take the TASP test. Students are referred to our office by many departments on campus for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons could be to discuss placement, test date recommendations, or workshop availability.

Most of the time students come in on a drop in basis, but when a teacher of a developmental student refers someone to us, he/she will give us a name and social security number. The reasons for referring the student could be for lack of attendance, poor grades, attitude, lack of study skills, possible handicaps, or personal

problems. Certainly, we don't offer solutions to all of these problems, but we can provide encouragement and suggest some campus resources which could help. Since Del Mar is a community college with no campus residency, many students just go to class and leave without ever knowing what is available to them. The TASP Advising Center tries to bridge that gap.

A teacher who refers a student from a remedial class offers a special challenge to us. Many of these students are at risk of dropping out of college, so it is important for us to make personal contact with him/her. Fortunately, each advisor has a computer which is connected to the campus mainframe. (See attachment number three.) From this information we try to make personal contact with the student by arranging a personal appointment. If this isn't feasible, we will talk on the phone, and as a last resort, we will write a letter to the student to address the student's situation in his/ her remedial class.

Another thing that has been done to fulfill a student need is to implement a campus policy for issuing a grade of remedial "I". This I is different from an incomplete which is in existence at many upper-level institutions. In remedial courses, the "I" grade may be assigned a student who, in the judgment of the instructor, has done the work assigned in the course but who needs further skill development to be prepared for a more advanced course. This grade is intended to give the student the opportunity to retake the same course; yet at the same time it is intended to recognize the student's effort, progress, and achievement. Unlike an incomplete, this "I" does not convert to any other grade. This grade is issued as a statement of progress. Although a student hasn't mastered the course, he/she has shown great effort and diligence throughout the semester.

Besides instituting the remedial I in an effort to help students achieve, Del Mar College also offers free workshops to all students. The TASP advisors offer workshops on study skills, such as test-taking skills, left-right brain, and coping with procrastination, in order to help students be successful. If a student is unable to attend a workshop, he/she may come to the Advising Center and meet individually with the presenter.

These study skills workshops have become the nucleus of a study skills class, which was first offered as a pilot course in the fall of 1990. The TASP Advising Source Book recommends that freshman seminars can be very helpful in getting good academic advising to students. Thus next fall, the academic advisors will teach a course in study skills that will be required of all students enrolled in nine or more hours who are pursuing college degrees, other than the AAS. The course will meet twice a week and give one hour of credit. The course is designed to make the student responsible for determining himself/herself what specific actions he/she can take to become a better student. Therefore, the course requires the student to be an active participator.

The first day of class, the students do an activity that shows them that they already have the seeds of greatness in them. Once they realize this, we can work on what specific things they can do to apply their strengths to their classes. Each student is asked to complete the following sentence: "I am a great . . ." The cards are collected and the responses are written on the board. Students then try to identify which class member wrote which response. This gives us the opportunity to talk about how first impressions can be mis-leading and how their impressions of a class from the first day or from hearsay might be inaccurate. As a follow-up activity, the next day each person writes how a skill or technique that they used to become great could be applied to becoming a great student.

Another one of the course activities is lunch with a mentor. In this activity, each student invites one faculty member to join him/her for lunch once a month. The faculty members who have been invited to participate in this have been flattered that someone has asked them to be a mentor. In the Spring semester, one student even asked the president of the college to be her mentor. At lunch, the students have the opportunity to talk to their mentor about how the mentor overcame obstacles to achieving college success. It also has as additional benefit of allowing the student to see a different side of the instructor from what is available in the classroom and to realize that they share some of the same characteristics as successful people.

In the fall of 1990, 25 students enrolled in the pilot class and 16 of them completed the course. All 16 enrolled for the spring semester. Twelve of the 16 students had previously attended college. Their average G.P.A. was .7 higher for the fall semester than for their previous college enrollments.

We are very proud of the course and the effect it has had upon students and of all of the activities we do to go beyond remediation in helping students stay in school and obtain the maximum benefit from doing so.

DEL MAR COLLEGE ASSESSMENT LEVELS

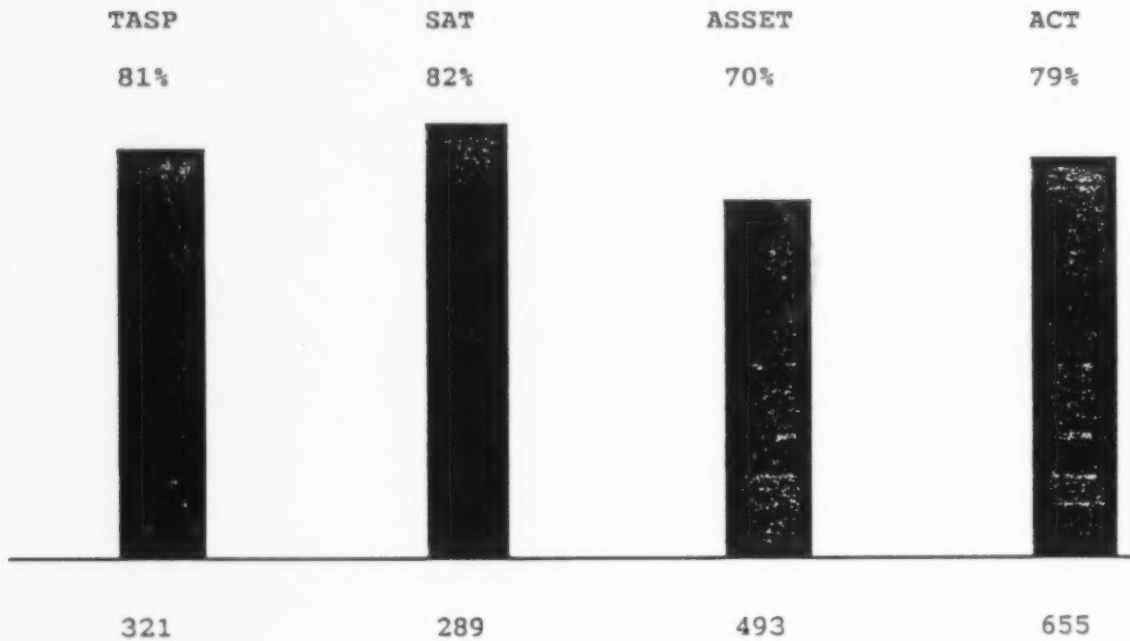
	LEVEL 1 BASIC REMEDIAL LEVEL		DECISION ZONE	LEVEL 2 INTERMED LEVEL	DECISION ZONE	LEVEL 3 COLLEGE LEVEL
READING	READING 305			READING 306		NO READING REQUIRED
ACT	0 - 12		13 - 14	15 - 17	18	19+
SAT	20 - 30		31 - 32	33 - 41	42 - 43	44+
ASSET	23 - 33		34 - 35	36 - 40	41 - 42	43+
WRITING ENGLISH	ENG 606AB			ENG 302		ENG 601A
ACT	0 - 12		13 - 14	15 - 17	18	19+ (*22)
SAT	200 - 309		310 - 339	340 - 399	400 - 419	420+ (*500)
ASSET	23 - 34		35 - 36	37 - 42	43 - 44	45+ (*50)
MATH	MATH	MATH		MATH 301		ASK ADVISOR
ACT	101	300	13 - 14	15 - 17	18	19+
	0 - 10	11 - 12				
SAT	200-309	310 - 349	350 - 369	370 - 439	440 - 459	460+
ASSET	23 - 28	23 - 33	34 - 35	36 - 43	44 - 45	46+

* TASP Advisors will use scores this high or higher to elevate reading placement by one level.

Attachment Number Two

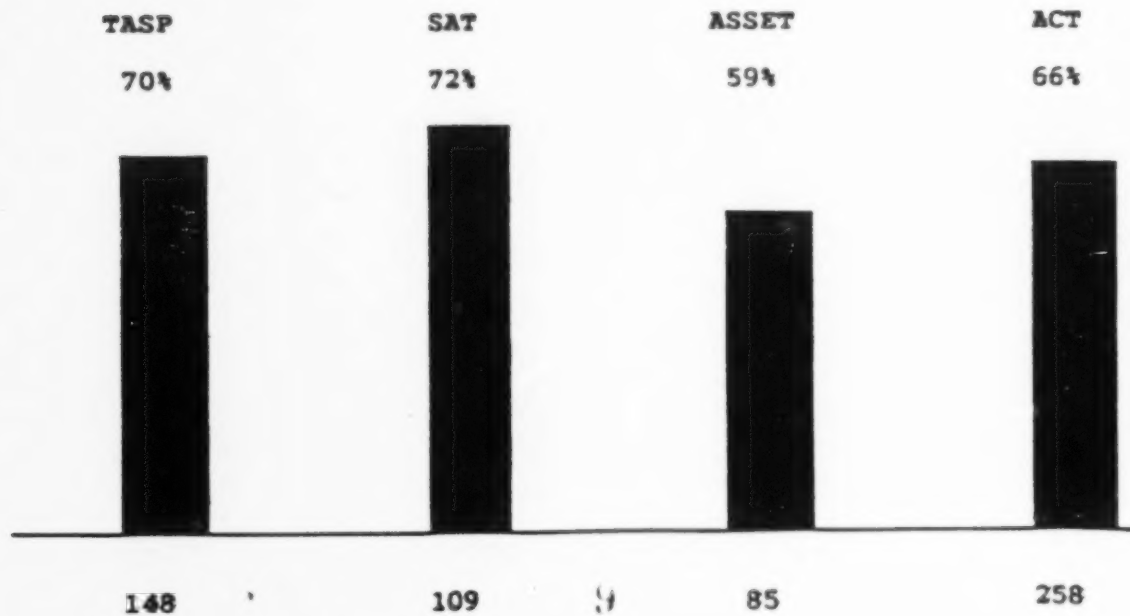
APPROPRIATENESS OF PLACEMENT IN COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES

ENGLISH



APPROPRIATENESS OF PLACEMENT IN COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES

MATHEMATICS



REASON FOR REFERRAL

1. Poor grades
2. Absences (#__)
3. Poor Behavior
4. Other

TYPE OF CONTACT

1. Telephone
2. Left message
3. Letter
4. No answer
5. Wrong number
6. Research only

COMMENTS

1. Made appointment
2. Didn't keep appointment
3. REFERRED TO

- A. Counseling
- B. English Learning Center
- C. Reading Center
- D. Math Department
- E. Special Populations
- F. Registrar
- G. Instructor

4. Other

NAME		SOCIAL SECURITY #	
HOME #		TASP STATUS	
WORK #			
ADDRESS		REFERRED BY	
ADVISOR		REASON	

DATES	TYPE	COMMENTS/REFERRAL	SCHEDULE